

P. P.

Pam 95

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH *of* MORTLAKE *in*
the County of Surrey, &c.

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the County of Surrey



10.
*National Humiliation the best Attone-
ment for National Sins.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED in the
Parish Church of MORTLAKE,

IN THE
County of SURREY,

On *Wednesday*, January 9th, 1739.

Being the Day set a-part by Authority for a Publick
FAST.

By EDMUND ARNOLD, L. L. B. Curate of the said
Parish, and Fellow of New-College in Oxford.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. CLARKE, in *Duck-Lane*; and Sold by J. ROBERTS,
in *Warwick-Lane*, and A. PIESLEY, Bookseller, in *Oxford*. 1739.

(Price Six-pence.)

National Humiliation the best Atone-
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IN THE

County of SURRY,

On Wednesday the 2^d of July 1739.

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FAST.



By EDMUND ARNOLD, L.L.B. Curate of the said
Parish, and Fellow of New-College in Oxford.

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(Price Six-pence.)

TO THE
GENTLEMEN

And Other the
INHABITANTS of the PARISH of
MORTLAKE:

THIS Discourse, published, at their
Request, is most humbly inscribed, as
a small Testimony of Gratitude and Affec-
tion, by their

Most obliged and

most humble Servant,

*Mortlake,
Jan. 28.*

ED. ARNOLD.

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PARISH CHURCH of MORTLAKE in
the County of Surrey, &c.

8th Chap. 1st Book of Kings, 44th and 45th Verses.

44th, *If thy People go out to Battle against their Enemy,
Whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto
the Lord toward the City which thou hast chosen, and
toward the House that I have built for thy Name :*

45th, *Then hear thou in Heaven their Prayer and their Sup-
plications, and maintain their Cause.*

FROM the fifth Chapter of this Book we read of
the mighty Preparations King *Solomon* was mak-
ing, to build a Temple to the great God, accord-
ing to the Divine Command to his Father *David* by the
Mouth of *Nathan* the Prophet. Upon the Acc

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ing of which, he assembled the *Elders of Israel and all the Heads of the Tribes, the Chief of the Fathers of the Children of Israel*, in *Jerusalem*, and they brought up the *Ark of the Lord*, and sacrificed *Sheep and Oxen* without Number, and celebrated the Dedication of it with as much Magnificence, as had been before expressed in the Building.

You will tell me this is foreign to the Purpose of this Day's Solemnity ; we are not come together upon a Festival, but upon a Fast. But the Sequel will adapt it to the present Occasion, when we come to consider this great King, as he stood before the Altar of the Lord, in the Presence of all the Congregation of *Israel*, and spreading forth his Hands towards Heaven, rehearsing the Immenstity of the Divine Majesty, his Mercy, and Faithfulness, invoking him to have Respect to the Supplication of his Servant, and hearken to the Prayers that should be offered in that holy Place. Methinks the Idea is exactly apposite to the Circumstances of this Day's Humiliation considered in this Light, when both Prince and People are prostrating themselves before the Majesty of Heaven, begging the Divine Blessing and Protection upon their Undertakings, which cannot be better expressed than in the Language of my Text.

So that how different soever were the Occasions, yet the Subject Matter is the same. And though the one was
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an Exultation for the Dedication of the Temple, the other should be a Lamentation and a Day of Penance a Dedication of ourselves to God in sincere Repentance for our Sins. That as we are now gone out to *Battle against our Enemy*, we may pray unto the Lord with that fervent Sincerity, that he may be inclined to *hear our Supplication in Heaven and maintain our Cause*.

This is the Purpose of our present Meeting, and I pray God we may execute it as we ought.

From the Words of my Text then, I shall take occasion to observe, *First*, that Prayer to God is the most effectual Means, and the surest Step, to Private, or National Success.

Secondly, That National Humiliations are the best Atonement for National Sins.

And, *Thirdly*, I shall apply the Whole to the present Circumstances in which we are engaged.

First I say, that Prayer to God is the most effectual Means, and the surest Step, to Private, or National Success.

This must be true, because God hath appointed it to be the Instrument of all his Blessings to Mankind; of which there are many Examples in the Old Testament, and to which there are numberless Precepts in the New. The *Romans* never entered upon any Enterprize, relating to the

Safety or Honour of their Republick, till they had first invoked their Gods to be propitious, and from their Sacrifices, which were occasionally offered, their Augurs were to form some Tokens of Success. The *Greeks* and Heathens, as we may learn from *Pythagoras*, *Tully*, and many other of their Poets, and Historians, always laid down the Adoration of the Immortal Gods, as their first Principle, who held the Ballance of Power in their Hands, suspending not only the Fate of Individuals, but weighing States and Empires, a like Dependent on their Pleasure. And indeed, it seems to be the first Dictate of Natural Reason, after the Knowledge of a God, to flee to him for Succour, to implore his several Attributes to our Assistance, his Wisdom to advise us in all Doubts, his Justice, in *helping them to Right that suffer Wrong*, his Power, in carrying us *through all Dangers*, and his Goodness, which disposes him to every Act of Compassion to his Creatures.

Hither must every Man repair, for private Blessings *in the House or in the Field*, without which, no Art or Industry shall prosper; though they *rise early and late take Rest*, and lay the deepest Schemes of Advantage to themselves; For *one may plant, and another may water, but it is God that giveth the Increase*; And as it is in the Natural World, so it is in the Political; the Plans of
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the wisest Politicians shall be unravelled, as the Spider's Webb, or crush'd like the Egg of the Ostrich, in the Dust, if the Almighty be not called in to give Life to the Design, and support it with his Providence. In the Christian Church, Prayer has been ever looked upon, as the Grand Expedient of Success: For which end, there are not only publick Liturgies appointed, for more solemn or Publick Worship, but many private Forms are every where to be found, for the Direction of our Domestick, and Family Devotions, in our Retirements with God; which are the surest Means of bringing down God's Blessing upon those who are thus employ'd, and consequently should be attended as the solemn Offices of Religion, not only by Parents, and Masters of Families, but by their Children and Servants, who are alike entitled to the Divine Goodness with themselves. But of this no more at present, designing to speak to it by Implication, under my second Head, wherein I am to show that National Humiliations are the best Atonement for National Sins.

By National Humiliations I understand, such Times and Seasons, as are wisely set apart for the most Solemn Acts of Prayer, and Fasting; to deprecate the Divine Wrath, and implore his Almighty Protection for the Future. The Sins of Nations cannot be atoned but by National Repentance. It is consistent with the Divine

Justice, to punish Collective Bodies in their Corporate and Politick Estate; the Sins of private Men will appear at another Tribunal against them, but the Relations and Ties of a Community must shortly be dissolved, and by Consequence, they are no longer capable of Rewards or Punishments, adapted to their Crimes, than whilst they continue in their Politick Estate. Hence it is that we read of a Succession of Divine Judgments, from the Annals of the *Jewish* People, to the present Age. There have been in all Nations, and all Ages, heavy Provocations, and crying Sins, which have called down the Almighty more immediately to interpose in the Order of the World, and to scatter Destruction in various Shapes amongst us; sometimes by a sudden Overthrow from our Enemies, sometimes by the ravenous Outrages of the Plague, and sometimes by leaving us to the Conduct of our own Devices. How natural was it then, while those *Judgments of the Lord were upon the Earth, for the Inhabitants of the World to learn Righteousness*; and could we but carry our Thoughts into some Foreign Nations, we might there see the bloody Footsteps of War and Desolation, *what Havock it has made of them altogether*, how dreadful the Scene of Bloodshed is, and how nearly it concerns us to implore the Divine Assistance, when such Dangers threaten and surround us. Therefore

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we are taught in exprefs Words to pray, that God would give *Peace in our Days*, because we have none other but *Himself that fighteth for us*: And if He for our Unworthiness should withdraw his Succour, and fight not in our Defence, we may prepare the Horse for Battle, we may ordain our Arrows against the Persecutors, and gird ourselves for the Victory, but we shall soon find, that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong; he will discomfit us, as he did the great *Assyrian Army*, and make us a Spoil, and a Reproach to them that are round about us. 'Tis true, there have been some good Men, who with *Moses* stood in the Gap, and petitioned God for the People. Thus *Abraham* intreated God for *Sodom*, and prevailed, if there were ten Righteous in it that the City should not be destroyed. So again *Phineas* the Son of *Eleazar* stood up and prayed, and the Plague ceased from *Israel*: And if the Prayers of one Man are so prevailing, how acceptable shall the Smoke of this Day's Sacrifice ascend, when the Whole People are begging Protection at God's Throne. 'Tis true, there are at present many Monsters of Iniquity ruling in the World; Sins which require a National Humiliation to deprecate their Guilt; Sins, which unless sincerely repented of, must end in National Perdition. Sins, which as it were, Storm Heaven by Violence, and Challenge forth the Almighty

to Vengeance. For these things all good Men weep incessantly, and lament in private, lest the destroying Angel should be sent forth to a Nation surrounded and swallowed up in Sin. For when a Nation grows rebellious and incorrigible, though Saints as illustrious as Noah, Daniel, and Job, *should be found in it, they should save neither Son nor Daughter, but should escape themselves alone for their Integrity.* Prayer and Fasting have been ever esteemed the most solemn Exercises of Religion, the one the Handmaid to the other, and when like *Mercy and Truth, they meet together, then Righteousness and Peace shall kiss each other. Truth and every other Virtue shall flourish in the Earth,* and God shall look down with Pleasure, at he did on the Works of the Creation, at the Beginning. The Guardian Angels, who execute his Pleasure, shall encamp about us, and Virtue shall be our Defence on every Side. There was a Time, when Religion and its Offices were grossly misapply'd. Nothing then was heard but Prayer, and Preaching, and Zeal for the Covenant, but none for Monarchy and Loyalty; from whence it came to pass, that *for the Sins of the People, and the Iniquities of the Priests, they shed the Blood of the Just in the midst of Jerusalem,* a Fact for which after Ages might repent, but the Guilt of it, *nothing but the Blood of the Son of God can expiate.*

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When this becomes the Case, *Prayer is an Abomination*; and Fasting, a down right Prevarication, *there is Iniquity*, and that *even in their solemn Meeting*. For Prayer is not the Labour of the Lips, but the pouring out of the Heart to God; and Fasting is not for Strife, and Debate, and to smite with the Fist of Wickedness, to bow down the Head as a Bullrush, and to spread Sackcloth and Ashes under us; but to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free, to deal our Bread to the Hungry, to cover the Naked with a Garment, to draw out the Soul to the Hungry, and satisfy the Afflicted; if we turn not away our Foot from the Sabbath, from doing God's Pleasure on that Holy Day, and call the Sabbath a Delight; then shall we cry and the Lord shall answer us, our Light shall rise in Obscurity, and our Darkness shall become as the Noon-Day. But if on the other hand, we look upon Religion, as a Burden, or a Jest, profane the Sabbath, and deface the Image of Virtue from our Souls; we must first of all expect the Divine Judgments upon ourselves as Individuals, and consider'd in our Politick Capacity, *No marvel if we are destroyed, both We and Our King*. Acts of Humiliation naturally lead us to recollect our past Actions with Indignation, and to form better Resolutions for the Future. By the One we shall atone for our past Miscarriages,

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by the Other avert the impending Rod of God's Displeasure. Upon this, not only our Private, but our Publick Security must depend. Whosoever therefore has a Value for his Country, Religion, Liberty, or Laws, will *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, and will seek to do it good*. Which we can only do by avoiding those Sins, which, as naturally as *Righteousness exalteth a Nation*, will be a *Scandal and Reproach to any People*.

Look back upon that abandon'd Nation the *Jews*; they were an incorrigible, and *stiff neck'd People*, the Consequence of which was, the total Demolition of their whole Civil, and Religious, OEconomy. They soon became no People, who were once *the People of God*. They are now a wandering, vagabond Race, without a *King*, without a *Prince*, without a *Sacrifice*, without *Altars*, without *Prophets*, and shall continue so to be, till *they shall return, and seek the Lord in the latter Days*, according to the Prophet. From this Example we may draw such Conclusions to ourselves, as may animate and influence Our whole Conduct. For, as the Apostle to the *Romans* observes, *If God spar'd not the Natural Branches*; which were planted by his own Hand, and water'd with his most peculiar Care, *but rooted them up* for their Infidelity, and Rebellion against him, the Consequences cannot be less dreadful, where

where the Provocations are not less Notorious, and we must justly expect to fall, after the same Example of Unbelief. However, as the Day of Salvation is not yet closed upon us, as we have still Opportunity for Peace and Reconciliation, if we comply with the Terms and Proposals of God's Will, let us (as the Solemnity of this Day directs) return to God with the utmost Fervency of Soul and Spirit; *casting all our Care upon him, for he careth for us.* Invoking him in our present Exigence, for Success against our Enemies, which is the Purpose of our present Meeting, and to which I shall apply the Remainder of this Discourse.

We are now assembled, in the most solemn Manner, before God, to beg a Blessing upon our Arms, and upon our Fleet, that are engaged in the present War. A War, which the repeated Insults and Invasions of our Neighbours, have made the Publick and National Desire. We may presume much upon the Justness of our Cause, upon the Strength of our Navy, and upon the superior Force of our military Aid. But we must remember, that *God ruleth in the Kingdoms of the Earth*, and disposes all Events at his Pleasure. That *it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any Confidence in Men, or in Princes.* Unless his Providence give a Sanction to our Endeavours, no Enterprize can prosper.

per. The Schemes of Politicians shall be *dispers'd like a thin Froth, that is scatter'd with the Tempest*; the imbat-tel'd Legions shall fly, as the affrighted Roes upon the Mountains, and the *Fortresses and Towers*, however im-pregnable in Thought, shall be *laid low and levell'd with the Dust*. Thus was it with that proud, uncircumcised *Philistine*, who *defied the Armies of the living God*. By how mean an Instrument was he slain, with all his Ar-mour, and his Arts about him, by the Stripling *David*, with a Sling and with a Stone, the certain Emissaries of Death, when conducted by that Hand, which *bringeth mighty Things to pass*. Human Prudence is at best but a weak short-sighted Principle, and the Politicks of Men are so closely knit with Prejudice, and Passion, that we are often misguided in our Pursuit, and are defec-tive in the Means, or in the End. It is very happy for us, that *the Lord reigneth*, to whom, as Supreme Moderator of the Universe, we may apply, for Reso-lution in our Doubts, for Protection in our Dangers, for Deliverance in our Distress. For whither the Weak-ness or the Malice of Man would carry him, directed by his own unstable Judgment, we cannot tell. Well is it therefore, that *the Lord is King, be the People never so impatient*; that *he sitteth between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so unquiet*. To him therefore should we run,

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as to the Fountain of Life, and secure an Interest in his Favour, whose Loving-Kindness is better than the Life it self; who giveth great Prosperity to his King, and is a Tower of Salvation to his People. Let us therefore, with united Hearts, address our selves to the Throne of Grace, where we are sure to obtain Mercy, and to find Help in Time of Need. Let us blow the Trumpet in Sion, sanctify the Fast, call a solemn Assembly, gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land, into the House of the Lord. Let the Bridegroom come forth of his Chambers, and the Bride out of her Closet: Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar, and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to Reproach, that the Heathens should rule over them; wherefore should they say among the People, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his Land, and pity his People, he will defend them under his Wings, and they shall be safe under his Feathers, his Faithfulness and Truth shall be their Shield and Buckler; they shall not be afraid for any Terror by Night, nor for the Arrow that flyeth by Day. A Thousand shall fall beside them, and Ten Thousand at their Right Hand. Kings shall be scattered for their Sakes. Her Merchants shall be Princes, her Traffickers the Honourable of the Earth, they shall come with Spoils from far,
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with the Riches of the Country shall they return; Joy shall be upon every Head, Thanksgiving, and the Voice of Victory. But if we lift up our Hands to God, and in our Hearts dissemble with him, if we are not sincere in every Act of Adoration to him, and Repentance of our Sins, we may yet live to see another Face of Things amongst us; this Nation, in the State of Babylon, when fallen, drinking of the Wine of the Wrath of God, spoil'd of her Beauty, divested of her Strength; no longer the Queen of Nations array'd in all the Splendor of the Merchant, but sunk to the lowest Ebb of Shame and Widowhood, for her repeated Fornications. Consider this, and as ye love your Country, pray for it, that God would be gracious to this Land, and turn away the Captivity of Jacob. As ye love the Establish'd Church, intreat him, that no Weapon that is formed against it may prosper, but that it may remain pure, and uncorrupt, in Doctrine, and Discipline, unto the End. And if we have regard in our future Conduct, to promote a due Concern for God's Honour, the Safety of our Civil, and Ecclesiastical Establishment, and the Good of our Country, we may say, as Judas Maccabeus did, to encourage his Brethren against the Armies of Syria. The Victory of the Battle standeth not in the Multitude of an Host, but Strength that cometh from Heaven. They

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may come against us with *Pride, and Iniquity, to destroy us, our Wives, and our Children, and to spoil us; but we will fight for our Lives and Laws.* God grant, the Event may be the same with us, as it was with him, when *Seron and his Host were overthrown before him.* In a Word, and to conclude. As the War is now begun, let Us carry it on with Zeal, conducted by Religion, putting on the *whole Armour of God*, let us wait for the important, hidden Event. Let our sincerest Adorations, and the Sacrifice of a broken and contrite Heart, continually Ascend, as Incense to his Throne; that from the fervency, and frequency of our Prayer, he may be inclined to *hear in Heaven, and to maintain our Cause.* Granting Us at the present, the Succours of his Might, and in his due Time, the Blessings of Peace: Unto whose Almighty Protection we commit ourselves, in and through the Intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord.

To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour and Glory, Thanksgiving and Power, henceforth and for evermore.

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 us from War, and our Children, and to keep us; but
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To return with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
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 and Power, Sovereignty and for evermore.

